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Sermons

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# HOPE FOR CHINA!

OR

BE NOT WEARY IN WELL-DOING.

BY

THE REV. GRIFFITH JOHN, 1831-172

*Of the London Missionary Society.*

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# HOPE FOR CHINA!

## A Sermon

PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,  
AT SURREY CHAPEL, MAY 8TH, 1872.

“Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”—GALATIANS vi. 9.

BEING a Missionary, I desire to speak as a Missionary on a subject of vital importance to us all. By many the Missionary is regarded as a fanatic, and the Missionary enterprise as a visionary scheme. The Duke of Somerset only gave a concise and pithy expression to a widely-diffused sentiment when he said, “A Missionary must be an enthusiast; for if he is not an enthusiast he is probably a rogue.” Among ourselves, also, there are some who seem to entertain grave doubts as to the possibility of evangelising the Hindoos, Chinese, or Japanese. They admit that the Gospel can raise the Malagasy, but they doubt its power to turn the Chinese to God. One of our most influential ministers told me some time ago that he very much questioned whether the Chinese would ever be Christianised, and that not a few of his brethren held views similar to his own in regard to the matter. During a Missionary career of fifteen years, I have been compelled to examine and re-examine the grounds of my convictions on this subject, and I am glad to be able to tell you that my faith in the reality and ultimate success of the Missionary enterprise was never stronger than it is now. I firmly believe that “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

It must be admitted that the success of Missions falls far short of the expectations that were generally entertained in regard to them. It is a fact that cannot be denied that many of the friends of Missions are not satisfied with the results. They expected greater things, and they are disappointed. But it is only fair to bear in mind that most of these expectations were founded on inexperience, or a profound ignorance of the real strength of the power of evil with which the Gospel has to contend in heathen lands. Some good people seem to think that the heathen mind

is in a beautifully receptive state in regard to Christian truth ; and that the Missionary needs do little more, in order to effect the conversion of whole races, than go from place to place and repeat the glorious declaration, that " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The Gospel appears to them so obviously true, and idolatry so glaringly false, that they cannot understand why it should be a difficult task to induce the heathen to adopt the one and abandon the other. Even Missionaries sometimes go forth with similar notions ; but they are soon undeceived. " Mr. John," said a young brother to me soon after his arrival at Shanghai, " do you know, I was in a great hurry to come out ; for I was very much afraid that all the Chinese would be converted before I could do so." I hardly need remark that he is a much wiser man now.

The fact is, that nowhere does the Missionary find the people prepared to receive or even understand his message ; and that generally many years have to be spent in breaking up the fallow ground and sowing the Divine seed before any fruit appears. Heber's well-known hymn is true or false according to the construction that is put upon it. If the meaning is that the moral, spiritual, and social degradation of the heathen is in itself a loud call to the Church, it is solemnly true. But if the idea is that the heathen, feeling their bondage and longing for redemption, are consciously inviting us to come and " deliver their land from error's chain," nothing can be more false. I have never met a heathen who seemed to be troubled with a sense of sin, or appeared to have the least desire to be delivered from its dominion. The Missionary alone can form anything approaching to an adequate idea of the blindness, the hardness, the impenitence, and the godlessness of the heathen mind when the Gospel first comes into contact with it. It is not the work of a day to build up afresh the ruins of nations that have been going to decay for ages ; or to overthrow ancient, subtle, and consolidated systems which are deeply-rooted in the minds of the people, and interwoven in the very fabric of their society. Let the friends of Missions bear these facts in mind, and their expectations will be more moderate and reasonable. Let them also look around them, and observe how slowly Christian truth is moulding the thought and life of Christendom ; and they will cease to wonder that not more has been accomplished in heathendom during the short period the existing agency has been at work. Though the Gospel has done much for Europe and America, yet the Popish superstitions, the scepticism, the worldliness, the immoralities and wars of Christendom make us often ask mournfully, " Where is the beauty and power of Christianity, even in these great Christian lands ?"

Allow me now to state some of the reasons which induce me

to believe in the reality and ultimate success of the Missionary enterprise.

"Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

I. I observe in the first place, *that the bright future revealed in God's Word, induces me to believe that "we shall reap, if we faint not."* The past is dark, the present is unsatisfactory; but there is a future, all radiant and glorious, foretold in this blessed volume, in which the Missionary delights to live, and from which he daily draws strength and consolation. I desire to commence here, because this is a firm and sure foundation to build our hopes upon, and because I have found it an unfailing source of inspiration in many a dark hour. Mere theorists may fancy that the world is rapidly outgrowing the Bible; but I feel perfectly sure that, as long as any practical Missionary work remains to be done, the Grand Old Book, with its sublime revelations and glowing visions, will not cease to live and give life. Allow me to give you an insight into our Missionary experience. There is a dark side to our experience; and I wish you to see it as clearly, and, if possible, feel it as deeply as we do ourselves. I have no desire to give a rose-coloured account of our work. The story of Missions has often been tinged with the gay tints of romance. Pictures have been drawn of Missions which have no original in the heathen world, and that in all sincerity and with the best intentions on the part of the painter. Young Missionaries, too, charmed with early appearances, and entranced with bright visions, will sometimes take their pen in hand and "write the things which shall be hereafter" rather than "the things which are." Thus, premature hopes have been excited, exaggerated conceptions have been formed, grand expectations have been disappointed, and the cause has been injured. There are two sides to our work, and the Churches ought to have both—the dark as well as the bright; for the Missionary needs their earnest prayers and heart-felt sympathy, as well as their warm congratulations and valuable contributions.

Whilst I regard the Missionary work as the noblest work to which a human being can possibly devote his energies, I candidly confess that I have found it exceedingly practical, sober, trying, and unromantic. Often does the Missionary's spirit sink in view of the blindness, the hardness, and the impenitence of the heathen mind. He has often to preach and teach for years without being cheered by a single apparent result. After a year, or ten years, or perhaps a longer period of hard toil and earnest crying to God, his heart is gladdened by what appears to be, at the time, the conversion of a single soul to Christ. But this one having joined him from unworthy motives, is soon disappointed, and shows his disappointment by forsaking the Missionary and his

God. Or a few gather around him as inquirers, but no sooner are they convinced of the purely spiritual character of his mission than they disappear for ever. Or he establishes a new station. Great prosperity attends his early efforts. He is delighted with the prospects, and writes sanguinely to the Directors and his friends at home. By-and-by, however, the impulse dies out, stagnation and death ensue, and after years of patient watching and prayerful teaching, the whole thing collapses and vanishes out of sight. He is sometimes sadly disappointed in men, and forsaken by those on whom he has been building great hopes and expectations for years. He preaches to hundreds every day; the heathen listen with much curiosity and some interest, but at the close of the week, the month, or the year, no fruit appears, and he can only ask sorrowfully, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Still he perseveres. His faith remains firm in the midst of outward disappointments; his hope continues to burn with a steady lustre; and his prayers become more earnest and heart-felt every day. What is it that sustains his spirit? Idolatry lifts up its head as proudly as ever. The heathen smile derisively at his efforts to undermine its foundations. His fellow countrymen in heathen lands venture to suggest grave doubts as to the practicability of the undertaking. At home he is spoken of as a fanatic or a rogue by some of the peers of the realm. And sometimes Satan will whisper in his own ears that there are grounds for misgivings, that the task looks hopeless, and that he might as well retire from the field.

In view of all this, what is it that inspires him with confidence and courage to persevere? I reply: His faith in God's word and the bright future revealed therein, is one of the principal sources of inspiration. He takes his Bible, and reads it under the solemn conviction that it is God's word, and therefore true. He sees in it that the downfall of idolatry is decreed by the Almighty, and that the earth is to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. He thanks God and takes courage; and rises from his Bible and from his knees a stronger man, determined to labour on and wait in prayer for the results. If the progress seems slow, he remembers that to God time is nothing—that to Him "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"—that God has abundance of time, and that He takes time to accomplish His grand purposes. He knows that the work is God's work, that the plan is God's plan, that the time is God's appointed time, and that if there be danger, it is God's own word and honour that are in danger. In view of the glorious future revealed in God's word, his heart throbs with unutterable joy even in the darkest hour; and he cannot but believe, even in the midst of many reverses and disappointments,



that his work is a real work, and that success is a mere question of time. Dr. Judson was asked on one occasion what were the prospects for the conversion of the Burmese. His reply was: "The prospects for the conversion of the Burmese are as bright as the promises of God." Do you ask me what are the prospects for the conversion of the Chinese? My reply is: "They are as bright as God's promises;" for "behold these shall come from afar; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim"—that is China. "Let us not be weary in well doing," for the bright future revealed in God's Word assures us that "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

II. *The present aspect of the work induces me to believe that "we shall reap, if we faint not."* I am quite prepared to admit that the progress made does not bear full proportion to the time and the means that have been expended on the enterprise. If our organisations had been more perfect and complete from the beginning; if the Protestant Churches, instead of obtruding their miserable divisions and distractions upon the notice of the heathen, had presented one unbroken front to the common enemy; if all the Missionaries had been men of apostolic mould, aflame with love to Christ, and burning with desire to save men; if the prayers of God's people at home had been more importunate and unceasing on behalf of the Missionaries and their work; and if the policy adopted and pursued by Christian Governments in heathen countries, and the conduct of foreign residents and visitors had been more worthy of the Christian name—if all this had been the case, the success would have been far greater than it is. But though the progress has not been as great as it might have been, and though the Missionary work continues to be pre-eminently a work of faith, still there has been progress, and wonderful progress too, considering the number and magnitude of the obstacles with which the Gospel has to contend in heathen lands. There has been no failure, and the fact that the success has not been greater can easily be accounted for. That Missions have accomplished so much, in spite of many imperfections within and gigantic obstacles without, is to my mind a clear proof of their reality and power.

Let us just glance over the Mission field, and see what has been accomplished.

Africa is one of the hardest of the Mission fields, and yet the Gospel has been proved to be the power of God unto salvation even in that dark region. We are told that not less than a quarter of a million Africans are now professing Christians, and the work is spreading in such a way as to inspire hope and confidence. Missionaries are to be found at present two thousand miles north of Cape Town; and the chiefs of barbarous tribes in

inner Africa are applying for Missionaries for their uninstructed people.

"In the West Indies slavery has been abolished and Christianity so diffused, that fairly it may be called the religion of the community; and education, which was formerly denied to the people, is now the heritage of tens of thousands."

In India, notwithstanding the mighty obstacles the Gospel has to contend with there, the Churches can boast of more than 250,000 converts and 50,000 communicants. Thankful as I am for these numbers, I feel much more thankful for the indubitable evidences we have of a vast amount of preparatory work which has been accomplished in that great empire. Idolatry, we are told, is rapidly losing its hold of all classes; religious festivals are not crowded as they once were; suttee, infanticide, and human sacrifices have been swept away; and caste itself, the great curse of India, is losing its charm, and beginning to be felt a burden. The pilgrims are beginning to whisper that the sacredness of the Ganges is fast drawing to its close, and that in about thirty years its sin-cleansing properties will have ceased to be. A great change is coming over the native mind in respect to female education. A native professor at Bombay feels compelled to say that Hinduism is sick unto death, and that he is fully persuaded it must fall. The Calcutta correspondent of the *Times* tells us that "the middle and upper strata of Hindu society, under the direct propagandism of Missions, and the moderate results of our rule, are seething with new ideas, desires, and beliefs; and present a study full of significance to the philanthropist and the scientific observer." These are the facts that cheer my heart in respect to India, and not the number of converts we have there at present. To my mind they speak volumes. They show clearly that Christianity is slowly, but most surely, undermining the very foundations of Satan's kingdom in the land, and silently effecting a revolution in the religious, moral, and social life of the people, that will astonish the world some day. In respect to India, I would say with the greatest emphasis, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

In Burmah the success has been very decided. It was about sixty years ago that Dr. Judson and his truly noble wife commenced the work in Burmah. Though the number of Missionaries has always been small there, they are able to report now more than 100,000 converts, and 400 preachers and pastors.

In the South-Sea Islands the results have been encouraging in the highest degree. Previous to the arrival of the Missionaries in the year 1797, there was not a native Christian in the whole of that region. For many years the Missionaries laboured in the midst of indescribable disappointments, discouragements, and personal sufferings. Some of them were murdered, and some of them



proved unfaithful. About fifty years ago there were only two Missionaries in all the South-Sea Islands, and it was then that the work was beginning to take effect. But observe how wonderfully it has grown during these fifty years! We are told that "not fewer than two hundred islands have been Christianised. In most of them idolatry has ceased to exist, and the people, with few exceptions, have declared themselves Christians. Education is everywhere advancing. An aggregate of 500,000 are nominally Christians, and 60,000 are in full communion with the Churches. There are scores of other islands where Missionary and native evangelists have planted the banner of the Cross, and are steadily and successfully gaining the same peaceful and beneficent victories. And all this has been done for less than a million sterling—for less than the cost of a mile of railway in London." The Churches are, for the most part, self-supporting, and striving earnestly to send the Gospel to the regions beyond. I don't know how that picture strikes you, but I confess that it fills my mind with wonder and gratitude.

I need not dwell on Madagascar. There the Divine influences descend not in occasional drops, but in plentiful showers, making the earth glad. There the Word of God is having free course and being glorified. In vain did the most fiery persecution contend with the power of the Gospel in that land. And how mightily has the Word of God prevailed in Madagascar since the re-establishment of the Mission! Until within the last twelve years, no schools or churches existed in the island, no Christian worship was permitted, and no profession of Christianity was safe. Now there are 300,000 adherents, 38,000 communicants, and more than 2,500 native preachers. The Queen herself has become a nursing-mother to the Church, and the Prime Minister and other functionaries are exhorting the people to believe in Jesus because He is the Saviour of the world. We are told that "large numbers of the people meet in places where they have built chapels for themselves, and come and sit in silence every Lord's-day without anyone to speak to them or to pray with them. Occasionally, after sitting the usual time, perhaps an hour or more, a man will rise, and lifting his hands, will look up to heaven and say, 'O God, we wish to worship Thee, but we do not know how. Teach us, O God, how to pray, or send some one to teach us.'" That work in Madagascar, with all its imperfections, is a wonderful work. For my own part, I cannot think of it without exclaiming, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." But, brethren, how is it that we are so slow to go up and possess the land which the Lord our God has given us in such a remarkable manner? The whole land is before us, and its four or five millions are waiting to be Christianised. It seems to rest with us as to whether the next generation of

Malagasy shall be Christian or Pagan. Why, if we had possessed the least spark of the enthusiasm of Missions, Madagascar would have set our souls all ablaze long ago; and instead of sending forth ten or twenty men to gather in that rich harvest, we should have been sending them by the scores and the hundreds.

I might proceed in this way and touch upon all the fields of Christian Missions, and show how God causeth His servants to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by them in every place; but I must pass on and speak of China, one of the most remarkable spheres of Missionary labour which the world presents, if not the most remarkable.

Many are greatly surprised that the work of conversion is going on so slowly in that empire, and I confess that there was a time when I thought it a great mystery. I don't think it so now; on the contrary, when I look at the difficulties by which the work in China is surrounded, I am only surprised that so much has been accomplished in spite of so many obstacles. I find that very few even in China, with the exception of the Missionaries themselves, have anything approaching to an adequate idea of their nature, number, and magnitude. For instance, in a lecture recently delivered in this country, by one of the oldest and ablest of Her Majesty's Consuls in China, an attempt is made to account for what is called "the comparative failure of the Protestant Missionary enterprise" in that country. It is, he said, attributable to many causes, among which he would specify the obtrusion of denominational differences; the erection of pretentious ecclesiastical edifices, which had the effect of exciting the jealousy of the Chinese priesthood; and the unfrequent adoption of the native costume by the Missionaries. Now, if Her Majesty's Consul had possessed a little practical knowledge of the Missionary work, he would have denied this "comparative failure" which he tries to account for, and he would have deemed it childish to specify these as among the grand causes of the apparently slow progress which we must all admit.

I have touched upon our denominational differences already, and I am willing to allow that they are an impediment in China, as well as in India and elsewhere. Had we been united in one mighty band, and determined to know nothing as Missionaries save Christ and Him crucified, the heathen would have listened more respectfully to our message, less power would have been wasted, and greater things would have been accomplished for the Master. Still they do not form one of the great mountains which stand in the way of the conversion of the Chinese.

As to our ecclesiastical edifices, they are as simple and unpretentious as they can well be. I never felt that they were a hindrance to the evangelisation of the people, but the reverse. I wish we had many more of them.

As to the native costume, I will repeat what I have said on another occasion, namely, that there are not half-a-dozen Missionaries in China who would not adopt it cheerfully if that would in the least help on the work. To many of our Christian friends in England it may appear an act of great self-denial to imitate the Chinese in this particular; but it is nothing of the kind. The Chinese dress is comfortable enough and graceful enough; and it is quite possible, as in Mr. Burnes' case, to get so accustomed to it as to have no desire to make a change on personal grounds. A missionary is safer in China, and will invariably command more respect, by being himself in dress and manners; and this is the reason why the Protestant Missionaries generally do not adopt the native costume.

These are not the causes why the Gospel has not made greater progress in China; if they were, I should think very much less of the Gospel than I do now. The conversion of the Chinese is a stupendous task, and the obstacles in the way are terribly formidable. Let us endeavour to form some idea of both.

Consider the vastness of the field. China is not a small island which may be compassed in a day. The whole empire is one of the largest the world has ever seen. It is much larger than the whole of Europe. It comprises the one-third of the continent of Asia, and the one-tenth of the habitable world. It exceeds the extent of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland 44 times, and that of England alone 104 times. That part of the empire called "China Proper" contains eighteen provinces; each province, on the average, is nearly as large as Great Britain, and thus "China Proper" is about equal to eighteen Great Britains. The features of the country are moulded on an immense scale, and they often exercise a depressing influence on the spirit of the Missionary. Sometimes an overwhelming sense of his own nothingness seizes him as he takes a survey of the land to be possessed, and he feels as if he could do nothing but sit down and weep at his utter helplessness. I am speaking from experience.

Consider, again, the vastness of the population. It is generally supposed that the population of China is somewhere between three and four hundred millions. I don't see much reason to question the substantial accuracy of the general opinion on this point. Go where you will in China, and the same impression of a teeming population is left on your mind. The cities, the towns, and the villages seem to be innumerable. The great centres of population, such as Peking, Hankow, Shanghai, and Canton present wonderful scenes of life and activity. Twenty-five years ago, before the place had been destroyed by the rebels, the population of Hankow, together with the two adjoining cities, could not have been less than three millions. It is now between

a million and a million and a half. But then think of this enormous mass of human beings. Four hundred millions! or three hundred millions! We cannot take the number in. Pent up there you have the one-third of the human family, and nearly the one-half of the heathen world! And then you must think of these hundreds of millions as welded together and bound by language, custom, education, religion, and government. It is not the work of a day to move that mighty people, and a wise man will not expect to see great changes taking place in their moral, religious, and social life without many years of hard toil and earnest crying to God.

Consider, again, their antiquity and civilisation. We must allow the Chinese a national existence of more than four thousand years, and thus regard the Chinese Empire as the most ancient and venerable now existing. It has watched the rise, the culmination, and the setting of some of the principal empires of the world. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome have all passed away; but China remains a wonderful and most interesting monument of patriarchal times. Compared with the Chinese Empire, the modern kingdoms of Europe are but of yesterday. But they are more than an ancient people, they are a highly-civilised people. They have been a civilised people for thousands of years, and a source and centre of civilisation to the surrounding nations. Their walled cities, their canals, their commerce, their agriculture, their government, their literature, their education, their competitive system of examination, and their remarkable discoveries—all show that they are a people who have reached a high degree of civilisation. The Chinese, taking them all in all, stand higher than any other Asiatic nation, not excepting the Hindoos and Japanese. Now, whilst their antiquity and civilisation constitute a very strong argument why we should strive earnestly to Christianise them, it must be admitted that they form a formidable barrier in the way of their speedy conversion. They make them arrogant, self-sufficient, and exclusive. The Chinese are intensely proud, and supremely self-satisfied. They are proud of their magnificent country, their great antiquity, their wonderful history, and their high civilisation. The Chinese thank Heaven that they have been born and educated in civilised China, just as we thank God that we have been born and educated in Christian England. Having been teaching others through the ages, they don't understand being called upon to learn; and they regard our conduct in assuming the position of teachers to them as nothing less than brazen-faced impudence. Notwithstanding our superiority in many respects, they call us barbarians, and doubtless regard us as such in their deepest hearts; and the fact that the Gospel is introduced into their country from foreign lands is to them an

all-sufficient reason for rejecting it, without inquiring for a moment into the intrinsic merits or demerits of its nature and claims.

Consider again, that these ancient and civilised people have, according to their way of thinking, their Scriptures and Infallible Teacher, just as we have ; and that, according to their standard of orthodoxy, the things most firmly believed in by us are rank heresy. The Personality of God, Creation, the innate and universal depravity of man, atonement, the immateriality and immortality of the soul—these and such doctrines as these are repugnant to the established faith of the "Seet of the Learned." Confucius is revered by the whole nation as the highest manifestation of humanity—the ideal pattern of man—the Infallible Teacher. Nature is incarnated in all beings, and especially in man ; but in Confucius this incarnation finds its highest point and effort. He is worshipped as if he were God. His sway over the Chinese mind is universal and absolute. "Is this doctrine taught in our Classics?" This is the first question asked whenever a new truth is offered for their consideration. What these Classics teach is true ; what they leave untaught is useless ; and what does not harmonise with their teachings is false. All moral and religious teachings are tested by this standard in China ; and the faith of the Chinese in their Bible is far more implicit than the faith of Christendom is in its Bible. It is not an easy task to dethrone Confucius and the Confucian Classics ; but this must be done before China can become our Lord's and His Christ's.

Consider, again, their ancestral worship—the real religion of the Chinese. The Missionaries are sometimes blamed by men who know very little about its nature because they proscribe the observance of it. But in this matter they are left without an alternative. This worship of deceased ancestors is a subtle phase of idolatry, and as such cannot be tolerated in the Christian Church. But it would be impossible for me to give you an adequate idea of the greatness of this obstacle to the spread of Christianity in China. Our members have greater difficulties on this point than on any other. To refuse to bow before the tablet—to refuse to sacrifice to the manes of a departed father or mother, that is a heinous sin in the eyes of the nation as a nation. There is something terrible to a Chinese pagan in the thought of dying without a son to attend to his grave and sacrifice to his spirit ; but it is a heartrending thought to him that he has a son, but so undutiful as to refuse to perform this, the most solemn duty that devolves upon him as such. Such a son would be denounced as unfilial—the greatest of moral delinquencies in China—by his neighbours, and cursed by his father and mother. It requires more than ordinary courage to face such opposition ; and consequently there are many in China who are convinced of



the truth of Christianity, but are unable to make a public profession of their faith on account of this obstacle. Moreover, the fact that Christianity proscribes this observance, is to the mind of the pagan a convincing proof that it is unfilial in its principles and tendency, and therefore a strong reason why it ought not to be allowed to take root in the land.

Consider, again, the great absence of religious life and moral earnestness which characterises the nation as a nation. Confucianism, the orthodox religion of the country, is essentially a system of morals, applicable only to this life, and confined to the duties which arise from the various human relations. Confucius himself disliked to touch upon religious subjects. He clung to the seen, the temporal, and physical with a tenacious grasp. The invisible, the spiritual, the eternal, and the speculative had no charm for him. He would attempt no replies to questions regarding man's spiritual relations, origin, and destiny. From all such themes he shrank with instinctive aversion. This stolid indifference to everything beyond the present and physical has been fully inherited by his disciples. They boast in their ignorance, indifference, and scepticism in regard to everything pertaining to religion. In their estimation religion is the most contemptible thing in the land. As to the people at large, they worship without cherishing a particle of reverence for the objects of their worship. The Chinese are a shrewd, practical, commercial, secular people, and never more so than in their religious performances. In the temple as well as in the shop, they have a steady eye to business. They bargain with their gods just as they do with each other, and their religion is a purely commercial transaction. A sense of sin, contrition for sin, humble gratitude, spiritual communion, reverence, love—these and elements such as these do not enter into the composition of their worship. There are three religions in China, and it is supposed by many that the nation is divided between these three, and that there are so many Buddhists, so many Taoists, and so many Confucianists. No mistake could be greater. These three systems live in perfect peace in China, though they are mutually as conflictive as Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Positivism. The people of China belong to them all. The Broad Church is in the ascendant there; and such is the latitudinarianism of the Chinese that they would neither see nor feel anything incongruous in being members of every Church and subscribers to every Creed under the sun. They would have no objection on religious grounds to admit Jesus into their pantheon, if He would take his place among the other gods, and rest satisfied with being regarded as one of the many. What they do not understand about Christianity is its exclusiveness, and the earnestness of its tone in regard to things spiritual and divine. This catholicity of theirs arises



wholly from their profound ignorance of, and their stolid indifference to, the nature and claims of any form of religious belief. Religion, as realised in the inward experience of the Chinese, is not worthy of the name. They seem incapable of assimilating non-materialistic ideas. There does not appear to be anything in their minds for religion to lay hold of. There is no thirsting there for the spiritual, the heavenly, and the divine—no longing for glory, immortality and eternal life. This feature in their character makes it difficult to draw their attention to the question of religion at all, and, even when secured, to make them feel that it is a matter of importance. And they are as devoid of moral earnestness as they are of religious earnestness. Morally the nation is rotten through and through. Bribery, corruption, and extortion fill the land. From the beggar's hovel to the dragon throne there is an entire absence of truth and honour. Such is the soil in which the Missionary has to sow the seed of divine truth in China. Can you conceive anything more unprepared and unpromising? Can you be surprised that the progress of spiritual truth is slow in China? How could it be otherwise? It is not an easy task to regenerate a people so utterly destitute of religious life and moral earnestness as the Chinese are. It will be done, I know it will be done, but not in a day.

Consider, again, the inertness and conservatism of the Chinese. Various influences have been brought to bear upon China from time to time; but the effect produced has been very small—in most cases hardly perceptible. But I am reminded of the spread of Buddhism in China. It would appear, at first view, as if this statement were contradicted by the progress of Buddhism in China. But we must bear in mind that of all religions Buddhism is the most versatile, plastic, and tolerant; and that, whilst it has been adopted by the Chinese to some degree, it has made no mark of its own on the nation. It has pulled nothing down. The Chinese are the same now as they were before the introduction of Buddhism. Buddhism has accommodated itself to them, but they have not been changed by it. There is something terribly formidable in this *vis inertiae* of the Chinese. They have every confidence in it; and they believe that it will prove more than a match for Christianity and every other foreign force brought to bear upon them. I look upon the immobility and conservatism of the Chinese as forming a main hindrance to the progress of Christianity among them, and, indeed, to the introduction of improvements of every kind. In this respect they differ widely from the Japanese. In Japan you have vitality and progress; in China finality and immovability. As a people, the Chinese belong to the past. In their views and feelings they are more nearly related to the men beyond the flood than to us. There is no end of talent among them. The Chinese are not among the

perishable races. There is abundance of stamina in the Chinese character; but the national mind is kept in a state of torpid hybernation by their extreme veneration for antiquity. They appear to me to be a nation with their heads turned in the wrong direction. Every look is backward, and every eye is fixed on the hoary past. The consequence is that China has been a petrification for ages. The officials and scholars worship antiquity, and deem it to be the grand object of their existence to perpetuate it. It is their interest also to keep alive the old, and to keep out the new. They depend upon the old for their influence, position, and even their daily bread. To strike the old on the head would be to break the charm of the Confucian name, to despoil the Confucian School of its prestige, and to make the Confucian scholars appear as other men. Hence the reason why the officials and scholars are so enraged against the foreigner and everything that belongs to him. They hate with all their hearts your railways, your telegraphs, and all your modern inventions and appliances. They dislike intensely to see the foreigner pushing himself into their great country with his notions of modern progress and modern improvements. They would, if they could, banish us from the country to-morrow—whether ministers, consuls, merchants, or missionaries, and restore to the whole land its pristine state of isolation and seclusion. The fresh and vigorous civilisation of the West has been within their reach for a long period; but they have hardly condescended to notice it; none of them understand it; the people know nothing about it; and the mandarins and scholars loathe the very thought of it. For some time they have been constructing arsenals, building gunboats, and translating books; but the object in view has been to put themselves in a position to oppose an effectual resistance to innovations of all kinds. They have adopted innovations to a certain extent, in order to prevent further innovations. To this anti-progressive spirit and policy the massacre of Tien-tsin and all the disturbances of the last four years are to be ascribed. Religious fanaticism as such has had nothing to do with it. In each and all of them the people were mere instruments in the hands of the mandarins and scholars. In this spirit and policy the Gospel, also, meets with a formidable obstacle. So far as they understand it, the mandarins and scholars must hate—hate it, because it is new and foreign—hate it, because it is life, light, and liberty—hate it, because its distinct and avowed aim is to cause old things to pass away and to make all things new. In this obstacle we see the entire influence of all the learning and authority of the empire exerted in order to prevent Christianity from taking root in the land.

I cannot do more than mention the opium trade, and the selfish and unchristian conduct of the British Government in

respect to it ; but it would be a sin to allow an opportunity of this kind to pass without referring to it. Our consuls and merchants may speak of the opium trade as a "political necessity," and as being "regulated by the ordinary laws of supply and demand." That is one way of looking at it, and a very soothing way, I suppose, to those who may be interested in it. But the Chinese themselves say that "England trades in opium because she desires to work China's ruin,"\* And the Missionary is made to feel constantly and deeply that this vile trade, with its disgraceful history, speaks more eloquently and convincingly to the Chinese mind *against* Christianity than he does or can do *for* it. And yet opium merchants will sometimes ask—Why is it that the Gospel does not make greater progress in China? "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." That is one reason at least. The trade is immoral, and a foul blot on England's escutcheon. Would to God it were possible to bring the British Government to see its unchristian character, and to induce them to "sacrifice their opium revenue on the altar of our national Christianity and China's well-being!" No one can study the history of modern Missions in India, China, Polynesia, America, the West Indies, and Africa, without being solemnly impressed with the fact, that the positively wicked policy often pursued by Christian Governments in heathen lands, and the unchristian conduct of many of the foreign residents and visitors, have formed one main hindrance to the progress of Christ's Kingdom. When I think seriously of these, I am only astonished that we have any success to record, and not at all that it has not been greater.

Such is the magnitude of the work which we are attempting to accomplish in China, and such are the principal causes why its progress is not more rapid there. Are not these obstacles gigantic barriers? Are they not alpine obstructions? It is not easy to penetrate them. It is difficult to remove them. But shall we, in view of them, turn our backs upon China as a country too great and too strongly-fortified to be taken even by the Lord of Hosts? No, never! say I. What say you? The obstacles are many and great; but they are being overcome one by one. The harvest is not yet; but there are already precious first-fruits. The great mountain is beginning to tremble. Let us have faith and patience—let us labour and wait, before Zerubabel it shall become a plain. Enough has been achieved to inspire us with courage and confidence, and the Divine resources are infinite.

I do not despair of the conversion of the Chinese, and I will tell you the reason why.

\* See Appendix.

Look, in the first place, at the marvellous way in which God has been pleased to open up that immense empire. Believing in the God of providence as well as in the God of grace, I cannot think of the changes which have taken place in China during the last thirty years, without asking with wonder and gratitude, "What hath God wrought?" Previous to the year 1842, China was in no sense of the term open to either the merchant or the missionary. In Dr. Morrison's days it was a crime to teach the language to a foreigner, a crime to learn it by a foreigner, and a crime to print anything in it for a foreigner. No public preaching was tolerated. To address an individual or two with fear and trembling, in an inner apartment, and with the doors securely locked—that is the way Dr. Morrison had to carry on his Missionary work for many a long year. To him China was a sealed country, and his being allowed to remain at Canton and Macao at all is to be ascribed to his connection with the East India Company. Taking all things into consideration, we are not surprised to learn that at the close of a laborious career of twenty-six years, this faithful servant of Christ could not boast of ten converts. A brave man that! Think of a man toiling on year after year for twenty-six years, and not being able to report ten converts at the close, and yet dying in faith! Milne knocked for admission, but was ruthlessly driven away. The other Missionaries were excluded from China, and employed in preaching to the Chinese scattered over the Archipelago.

It was our first treaty with the Chinese Government, concluded at the city of Nanking in 1842, that began to open China to the merchant and the missionary, and thus the age of Protestant Missions in China is not quite thirty years. I mention the Missionary, not because he was thought of by the Plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger, when framing that treaty. Indeed we know that his existence was completely ignored, and that nothing could have been further from the intention of our Government at the time, than to widen the sphere of his operations. I mention the Missionary, then, because it was that treaty that made it possible for him to establish himself in China; and because I discern in that event the finger of God, and a Divine purpose infinitely transcending that of saturating the country with opium or even British manufactures. But it was the last treaty, which came into operation in 1860, that opened China, and it is during the last ten or twelve years that our work has flourished most. That treaty did not only add nine new ports to the preceding five, but threw the whole country open so far as the right to travel is concerned. Now, this is a marvellous change. Just think of it. Only thirty years ago no Missionary durst stand up in any city in China and preach Christ. Now he may go, with the Bible in his hand and the Gospel on his lips, and declare the life-giving

truth, that there is "one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," in every city and town and village of the land. Missionaries are to be found now in Peking, the capital, and in Hankow, that immense mart, in the very centre of the empire. They have established more than three hundred stations and out-stations in different parts of the country, and have proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation over the length and breadth of the land.

An effort was recently made by the Chinese Government to close the door once more against the Missionary; for that was the object of the famous "Chinese Circular." But it cannot be. That door, I verily believe, has been opened by God Himself, and it is such that no man can shut. I am not sure but that the Chinese will make one effort more to exclude all foreigners. The exclusive and anti-foreign spirit of the officials and scholars remains unchanged. They still desire to see their great country stand apart, like a great world within itself, from the rest of the globe. But this also cannot be. That empire is no longer self-contained and self-poised. We cannot unravel the future, and learn what is mingled in its web; but we know that that magnificent country can never return to its former state of isolation and seclusion. There are mighty forces at work which are impelling China forward, and to which she must yield whether she will or no. The world is advancing, and China must advance too. I believe she will move, and that a bright future is awaiting her. The resources of the country are simply inexhaustible, and the Chinese are capable of the highest development. I am looking forward with the utmost confidence to a time when that great but slumbering nation will awake, and shake itself from the dust; and when that wonderful land shall "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Again, look at the noble band of men that God has given China. This is another reason why I do not despair of her evangelisation. It is not pleasant for me to speak on this subject; but is there not a cause? Please bear in mind, however, that I am speaking of my brethren, and not of myself at all. Many faults have been found of late with the Missionaries in China. It has been stated that they are indiscreet, and that their indiscretion is the sole cause of danger to the friendly relations which have sprung up between China and foreign nations. Now, I am glad to be able to say that there is not a word of truth in this statement as far as the Protestant Missionaries are concerned. The object of the Chinese Circular was to make out a strong case against the Missionary and his work, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, and yet it does not contain a single charge against Protestant Missionaries. Not long since, the Chinese Foreign-office admitted to the American Minister, that "Protestant Missionaries had never been found guilty of political



intrigue." And this witness is true. They have never shown the least desire to establish an *imperium in imperio* in China. They ask for no special privileges for themselves, and they do not wish to stand between the converts and the operations of the laws of their country and the obligations of citizenship. The Chinese Circular is, I think, a satisfactory answer to the many unfounded imputations which have been heaped upon them in this country during the last four years.

It has been stated, too, that "the human instrumentalities brought to bear upon the Chinese people for their conversion, is seemingly ill adapted to secure the end proposed." Now, though the Missionaries in China would be thankful if they were better fitted for the stupendous task which lies before them, and would greatly rejoice to see men more highly endowed than themselves coming out and take up the work, yet they need not be ashamed of themselves, and the Churches need not blush on their account. Among them there are many names that will never perish in China. Neither the Diplomatic service, nor the Consular service, nor the Mercantile enterprise can boast of men of greater ability, of higher culture, and in every way better adapted to secure the end proposed. The Chinese are indebted to them for nearly all the scientific as well as the religious works that have been translated into their language, and the world is indebted to them chiefly for the most valuable information it possesses in regard to the language, the literature, the history, the religions, and the manners and customs of the Chinese. But it must be confessed that some of the best Missionaries are men of whom the noisy world hears least. They are not authors, not because they lack the requisite taste and ability for the production of literary works, but because they deem it to be their duty to crucify their natural predilections, in order to devote the whole of their time and energy to what seems to them to be a more urgent and toilsome work. It certainly requires "special grace" in China not to write a book. All honour to the translator and the author. Our enterprise needs both. But theirs is the easier, and in the eyes of the world the more honourable task. The man who is to be found in season and out of season superintending his churches and schools, preaching and teaching in the chapels, the streets, the tea-gardens, and other places of public resort, travelling among the surrounding cities, towns, and villages, and everywhere dispensing the bread of life to perishing men, and striving to impress upon immortal spirits the image of Jesus—this is the Missionary *par excellence*, the true Apostolic successor, the kind of man China most needs at the present time. Well, you have such men in China, or, at least, you have men there who are exerting their utmost to realise this ideal, and they are doing a noble work. One of our ministers made the



remark not long since, that he did not know more than one who had not bettered himself by becoming a Missionary. I wish I could take him and many like-minded with him to China (in spirit, at least, for I doubt whether they would care to go in any other form), and let them see the Missionaries in the midst of their work. They would soon be convinced, I think, that most of them were there, not because they look upon the Missionary work as a bread-and-butter enterprise, but because they can say from the depth of their hearts, "The love of Christ constraineth us." "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Whilst the Lord of the harvest continues to send forth labourers of this stamp into His harvest we need not despair of China.

Look, again, at the amount of work that has been accomplished in spite of the numerous and formidable obstacles in the way.

The language is a great barrier, but it is not insurmountable. It is much easier to master it now than it was in the days of Morrison, Milne, and Medhurst. At present it is thoroughly understood; excellent dictionaries and grammars have been prepared in it; the Bible has been translated into it; and not a few valuable works on theology and the sciences have been given to the people in a style both intelligible and idiomatic. There are but few Missionaries who are not able to master it sufficiently within two years to be of real service; and there are tens of Missionaries who preach in it daily with accuracy and fluency. During the last twelve years the Gospel has been preached, and the Word of God extensively distributed in seventeen of the eighteen provinces; and thus there are tens of thousands in each of these provinces who have heard the Missionaries speak in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

The attachment of the Chinese to antiquity, and their veneration for Confucius and other sages, constitute a mighty obstacle. But we have in China at present more than 7,000 communicants, and among them some of the scholars of the land, who have learned that the ancients were fallible beings, that Confucius was only a man, and that Jesus alone is the Saviour of the world.

The weakness of the religious instinct in the Chinese mind is a great obstacle. But there are among our members, men who have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come—men who are earnest, zealous, and warm-hearted Christians—and men who are exerting their utmost to sow the divine seed in the hearts of their fellow-countrymen. I have seen the story of Divine love move even the Chinese to tears.

Their ancestral worship is a terrible barrier. But we have men in our Churches who have learned that there is to them a Father in Heaven—a Father infinitely greater, and infinitely nearer to them than any human parent can be, and that his com-

mand is, "Honour thy father and mother," but "Thou shalt have no Gods before Me." There is sufficient strength in the spirit of adoption whereby they cry, Abba Father, to remove every idol from the heart, and secure the throne to God alone.

The work being in its infant state in China at present, I attach no great value to the statistics of our Missions as an index of their success; yet I am glad to be able to show that they are such as to inspire confidence. When the late Rev. Robert Wilson and myself went to Hankow, in 1861, there was not a single native Christian in the place, that is, in connection with the Protestant Church. When I left, at the close of nine years, we had received more than two hundred members in connection with our Mission alone, among whom there were more than 30 whole families and more than 50 women. The other Missions also had been successful in bringing souls to Christ. Though we are bound to confess that hitherto "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" yet I am glad to be able to say, that among our most zealous converts and most efficient native teachers, are to be found respectable scholars. For instance, in our little Church at Hankow, there were, when I left, eight or nine B.A's., one M.A., and several undergraduates besides. The progress in other parts of China is equally satisfactory, and in some parts more so. The Missions at Amoy and Fuchow, have been making rapid strides of late. And the ratio of increase over the whole field is very encouraging. Take the following table:—

	1853	1863	1864	1868
Stations and Out-Stations	26	108	130	306
Native Preachers	59	141	170	365
Native Christians	351	1974	2607	5743

Let this rate of progress continue, and we shall close the 19th century with more than a million and a half of Native Christians in China.

But it would be very unfair to look upon our six or seven thousand converts as representing the total *apparent* results of our labours. There are hundreds around the various stations who are standing somewhere between the two kingdoms, and we are constantly receiving into our communion men who have been halting between two opinions for years. Some of those who were in this state of mind when I left Hankow have been received into the Church since. Here and there the people are beginning to question their old creeds and superstitions; some have already cast them aside as worthless things; and there are not a few who have become Christian in sentiment, though they have not yet joined us.

But I protest against the unfairness of gauging the work in China at present by what is called "apparent results." The in-

visible results are, I verily believe, far greater and far more important than the visible. The growth of our work is similar to that of a plant. The root of a plant takes a longer time to grow than the stem; but maturation takes less time than either. The giant oak is wrapped up in that tiny acorn, but to develop it, the acorn must have time to strike its roots, and the sapling must be exposed to the necessary influences. Summer and winter, spring and autumn, the stormy winds and soft breezes, have all had a share in, and were all necessary to, the development of the baby-oak into the fair tree you see to-day. So it is with our work. All great work requires time. It takes a long time to prepare for, and lay the foundation of, a great building. The Chinese finish off the foundations of their houses very rapidly; but it is *hollow* walls they build thereupon. If we intend to erect solid walls we must lay a solid foundation. If we wish to see durable results, our preparations must be slow and real. In looking back upon my Missionary life, I can see clearly that I have committed many blunders, and that the principal cause was my hurry and bustle. I have had many an illustration in China of the old proverb, "The greater haste, the less speed." I would say, Let us beware of allowing ourselves to be driven on by the cry for results. God takes time to accomplish His grand purposes; let us do the same. There was a time when we thought the work of creation was completed within six ordinary days. Geology has taught us a different lesson. Slowly—very slowly—did God build up this wondrous fabric; but see the amount of work that He has put into it. Slowly—very slowly—is He now carrying on a still more glorious work in the moral world; but the foundation has been laid, the superstructure is advancing, in due time the temple will be finished, and again it shall be recorded—"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Though there were not a single convert in China, I should not allow that the work was a failure. I should still go on ploughing and sowing; for the husbandman sows his seed, and then "waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

Still I bless God that it is not a matter of experiment with us now as to whether the Gospel can or cannot influence the Chinese mind. It is influencing it, and doing precisely the same thing for them that it is doing for you and me. It gives them the victory over sin and death. It enables them to say that old things have passed away, and that all things are become new. It makes them feel that to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. You have been told that those who say that "the Missionaries are making sincere Chinese Christians" must be governed by a delusion or guilty of a fraud.

Well, I am prepared to say this, distinctly and boldly, and you must judge for yourselves as to the parties who ought to be regarded as authorities on this subject—whether the Missionaries who live and labour among the people, or a Correspondent of the *Times*, who pays a flying visit to the country, and leaves it as ignorant of the Missionaries and their work as the day on which he landed. I don't say that all our converts are genuine; neither do I say that all that are genuine are all that we could wish them to be. But I do mean to say that we have genuine Christians there; and that they have risen rather than fallen in my estimation since I have had an opportunity of comparing them with the professing Christians of this country. Christ, I firmly believe, is taking possession of China. When it shall become wholly His, I know not. Hundreds of years hence, perhaps—tens of years hence, perhaps. It has not been given to me to know the times and the seasons. But I *know* that it is becoming His; I *feel* that it is becoming His; I *see* that it is becoming His. I have no more doubt of the ultimate evangelisation of the Chinese than I have that the sun will rise to-morrow. I don't regard the time that I have spent in China as having been spent in vain, and I shall return to that great country much stronger in faith than when I went. I never saw the obstacles in their number and magnitude as I see them now—never felt them so deeply as I feel them now—was never so conscious of my own nothingness, and the nothingness of all mere human instrumentalities as I am now; and yet I never felt more sure of the victory. I have seen the Gospel work miracles in China, I have seen it make the lying truthful, the dishonest honest, the earthly heaven-aspiring, the godless and Christless God-fearing and Christ-loving. I have seen it take Confucius down from his lofty pedestal, and converting the proud Confucianist into a humble disciple of the lowly Nazarene.

Not much has been done, it is true, as compared with what remains to be done; but “my faith is large in time, and that which shapes it to some perfect end.” The obstacles are great, but they shall be overcome. “For every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” What are obstacles to God? To man in this age they are mere incentives. See how man triumphs over difficulties. Look at the Suez Canal, the Atlantic Cable, the Pacific Railroad, and the Mont Cenis Tunnel. See how man compels nature to yield up her treasures, and reveal her secrets. See how he girdles the earth with his iron roads, the speed with which he “ploughs the watery wave,” and the ease with which he tames the lightning to carry his

messages. Man in these days defies obstacles, matures his plans, and completes his work. Shall God be less than man? Shall man succeed and God fail? Impossible! God said in the beginning, "Let there be light," and there was light. Do we not hear the same Voice in these days speak the same almighty fiat in regard to the dark regions of the earth? In Polynesia He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. In Madagasear he said, "Let there be light," and there was light. In China, He is now saying, "Let there be light." Shall He speak in vain? Impossible! The light has already been kindled there; and having been kindled, it must spread till all is luminous. The Sun of Righteousness is rising upon the land of Sinim. The mountain tops are beginning to catch His gladsoime beams and rejoice in a new day. Ere long He will descend into every valley, enter every ravine, chase away all the darkness and shadows, and fill the whole land with light, life, and joy. A vast amount of earnest work has been done in China; the Divine seed has been widely sown; here and there it is springing up and bearing fruit; a rich harvest is awaiting us, which we shall reap with joyful hearts in days to come. Thus the present aspect of the work induces me to believe that in due season "we shall reap, if we faint not." The experiment has been made, and everywhere the Gospel has proved itself to be the power of God unto salvation.

III. *In the supernatural origin of the Gospel and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit we have a pledge and a proof that we shall reap, if we faint not.* Christianity is Divine. It is not a something which man has evolved out of the depth of his own nature, but a mighty power which has descended into this world from Heaven itself. A long period had been given to man to find out how far he could advance in the knowledge of God and in moral and spiritual culture by his own power. We know the result. Instead of advancing, he went back; and instead of rising, he sank deeper and deeper in moral and spiritual degradation. These systems of religion elaborated by the unaided reason of man are pitiful failures. Some of them have disappeared wholly; all of them have lost the little vitality they once had; and the day cannot be very far distant when these human inventions shall have ceased to be. But Christianity is God's new creation, and it cannot pass away. It must accomplish that whereunto it has been sent. It did not spring up from the plane of nature like other systems, to have its day and then cease to be. In it, as it has been well said by another, we see Christ as the Great Power of God, working mightily among men, transforming human hearts, remodelling institutions and governments, and directing and consecrating the spiritual forces of the world. It assimilates to its own nature all that is good,



beautiful, and true in the race, and imbues it with its own spirit. It takes possession of the soul, struggles with its corruptions, and ultimately expels all the demons that lurk therein, and secures the throne to its Maker. It penetrates the darkness of society, becomes blended for a time, it may be, with the impure elements by which it is surrounded, so as to lose its Divine form, and assume a shape wholly alien to itself; but there it works, and, by its own intrinsic power, transforms and purifies, and ennobles the whole, and ultimately reappears in its native brightness and glory. Thus, I look upon the Gospel itself, apart from any accompanying agency of the Spirit, as a mighty power in the world, whose source and centre is Jesus Christ. But I cannot stop here. I believe in the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Missionary is, there I firmly believe the Holy Ghost is too, to guide and strengthen him, and to open the eyes and move the hearts of men to behold the beauty and feel the power of the Gospel. When Dr. Morrison went to China, he was asked if he expected to make an impression on the Chinese. "No," was his reply, "but I expect God will."

These are the facts which give weight and meaning to the Missionary enterprise; and these also are the facts which our traducers constantly forget, or are unable to understand. The foolishness of preaching has ever been scorned by the unbelieving world. Are the Missionaries mad? Do they expect to convert such countries as India, China, and Japan by preaching sermons? Give these nations schools. Give them the arts and sciences—introduce our western inventions, and baptise them with our western civilisation. That is, give them everything but Christianity, believe in every power but the Gospel, and preach what you will, but don't preach Christ. We are told by one writer on China that the secret of evangelising as well as civilising China consists in saturating China with British manufactures. O folly! Men forget, will forget, that the Gospel is not a product of this earth, but a Divine thing sent down from Heaven itself, and that the power is not of the Missionary but of God. When will men learn that we have to deal with human sin and offer a Divine redemption; and that all these things, however desirable in themselves, are utterly unequal to the task of healing the spiritual maladies of the race, of restoring holiness to the soul, and of lifting men to freedom and the favour of God.

I believe in the advancement of commerce; I believe in saturating China with a knowledge of the arts and sciences, and secular learning of every kind; I believe in introducing into China railways, telegraphs, and all our mechanical inventions and appliances; but I believe, too, that China will never rise without Christ. I don't deprecate commerce; still I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that there is no power in British manufactures to save



souls. What the Chinese must have, before they can possibly advance in the path of true progress, are deep religious convictions and acute moral sensibilities. What the Chinese need above everything else, is something to infuse into the nation a new and divine life—something to make them good, holy, and happy evermore. Without this, they must ever remain the untruthful, dishonest, deceitful, and impure people they are; and material prosperity in their present moral condition would be a bane rather than a blessing to the nation. The religions of China are entirely powerless to accomplish this. Buddhism and Tauism have made the people extremely superstitious, but not religious. Confucianism has dried up the religious sentiment in the Chinese mind, and left it the most worldly and unspiritual thing imaginable. Commerce can do a great deal; the arts and sciences can do a great deal; but they cannot bid the dead in trespasses and sin rise and live again. The Gospel alone is the power of God unto salvation, and salvation from her moral and spiritual misery is the great need of China. And the great need of China is the great need of India, Africa, and all heathen lands, and the Gospel is equally adapted to all. You have read of the pearls that filled the water-skins of the fainting Arab in the desert, and which he flung down with the despairing cry, "Alas, they are only pearls!" Just so; your arts and sciences are only pearls. The world has a great thirst, and the Gospel alone can quench it.

He who has been born again will not despair of the conversion of the heathen, and he who has not felt the power of the Gospel in his own heart is no authority on this subject. The Missionary who can say, "The Gospel has conquered me," will not hesitate to add, "It can conquer the pagan too." Conscious that the Gospel is Divine, and that the Holy Ghost is with him, he fears not to face the most gigantic form of error and darkness, and say, "I am stronger than thou art, and thou shalt perish." Hence he goes forth strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. He sows beside all waters; he drops the Divine seed even where thorns and thistles grow, and scatters it on the rock. He is not weary in well-doing, for his faith in the Divinity of the Gospel, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, assures him that we shall reap, if we faint not.

IV. *The relation of Christ to the world makes it absolutely certain that "we shall reap, if we faint not."* This is Christ's world; He died for the whole of it. He is the Saviour of all men. The Chinese have their sages many, but to them as well as to ourselves, there is no salvation in any other. If the Gospel is not adapted to them, their condition is sad beyond all description. Can we believe that God's great plan of salvation has nothing to do with the millions of India, China, and Japan?

Can we believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, can cleanse *us* from all sin, but that the sins of those great nations are beyond its reach? If we can, it is certain that we know nothing of the depths of God's love, nor of the cleansing power of the blood of Atonement. "For God so loved the world." "And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Again, God has given the heathen to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Not all the heathen, excepting the Hindoos, Chinese, and Japanese, God has given to His Son, but *all*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Of this we are perfectly certain. But we know also that the Son can never be satisfied with a world short of these great empires. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." But how can the Son be satisfied without India's two hundred millions, or China's more than three hundred millions?

There is another fact touching Christ's relation to the world. Christ is still in the world. I don't think of Jesus as One who has retired to some distant corner of the universe, and there enjoying quiescent repose far beyond the reach of the noise of the battle that is going on in our world. I cannot conceive of Jesus as resting yonder, whilst His people are toiling and struggling in the interest of His kingdom here. The Missionary must have Jesus as an ever-present friend with whom he may talk and tell his all, and on whom he may lean and ever feel strong. When travelling alone in that vast empire, I never felt that I was alone; there were always two of us at least—Jesus and myself. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Though invisible, He is here, and now planning all things, directing all things, and leading us from victory to victory. He is here toiling and suffering in connection with the work to a degree inconceivable to us. We may slumber and sleep, but He never rests day nor night. The restoration of the world to God is the work which is nearest and dearest to Christ's heart, and to which He is wholly consecrated. He is present in all the changes, upheavings, and commotions of the world, and making all things subservient to this one great end. This is a source from which I have been deriving consolation and strength for many years. Whilst Jesus lives, and whilst He remains with us as our Leader, I shall never admit a failure—I shall never turn my back on the battle-field—I shall never refuse to face the enemy, though he be Goliath himself. "Let us not be weary in well-doing;" this is Christ's world and He is ever-present with us; "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Brethren, let us try and look at the Missionary work in its greatness and glory, and feel the deepest interest in it as our own. Let us look beyond England and even Europe, and take the

whole world into our hearts. It is Christ's world—every kingdom, and province, and city, and hamlet, and hut of it. He took the whole of it into His bosom, he loved the whole of it, He shed His precious blood for the whole of it, and He is now taking possession of its mighty kingdoms and tribes. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,"—that is Christ's promise. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,"—that is Christ's empire. "And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer,"—that is Christ's work. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever,"—that is Christ's triumph. "Goye therefore and teach all nations,"—that is Christ's command, which comes to each one of us, and for the execution of which each one of us is responsible to his Divine Master. The Captain of our Salvation is gone forth conquering and to conquer. Shall we look on with indifference and say, "That's His business"? Or shall we fold our hands in despair, and mutter to ourselves—

"Ah, folly, for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time nor in our children's time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that live,  
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year."

Oh no, for

"well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

Let us rather put on our armour, and follow Him who is leading us from victory to victory.

It is Christ's work, this Missionary work; and ours because of the love we bear to Him as our Almighty Redeemer and the Sovereign of our hearts. It is a glorious work; for Christ has undertaken it as a work worthy of Himself. It is a work that must prosper; because the Gospel is Divine, because Christ Himself is with us, and because we see on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Let us believe in Him and His everlasting truth. Let us follow Him, sympathise with Him, and suffer and die for Him, if it be necessary. Let the unbelieving world sneer at the Missionary enterprise as much as it likes; and let noble Dukes belabour the Missionaries with the cudgel of bad names, and dub them enthusiasts, visionaries, and rogues as much as they please; but let us go on with our work. Like the four living creatures in the vision of Ezekiel, let us go straight forward; whither the Spirit

goes let us go, and let us turn not as we go. They live in a world different from ours. They cannot see with our eyes, nor feel with our hearts; and, thank God! we cannot see with their eyes, nor feel with their hearts. We can pity their blindness, but we cannot pay a compliment to their scorn by abandoning our glorious enterprise. We have felt in our deepest heart that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Ready are we therefore to preach it to every kindred and tribe. We will preach it everywhere—we will preach it in its simplicity, purity, and fulness—we will preach it as the power of God unto salvation, and we will conquer the world to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. And “his name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.”

Brethren, we must go on with this work. We dare not turn back; we cannot stand still. But if the work is to go on, you must consecrate yourselves to it. We want your money; we want your best men; and we want your most heartfelt sympathy and importunate prayers. You may not be able to go forth as Missionaries yourselves, but you are bound in the sight of God to do what you can to send out others. This is a great spiritual work; and you must infuse your spiritual life into it if you would see it triumphant. I thank God for organisations; but they must not be allowed to come in between the Churches and the work, and prevent individual and personal identification with it. Machinery is desirable; but if the spirit of life—and I refer now to the life of the Churches—is not in the wheels it will answer but little purpose. This is a matter of vital importance. God has devolved upon the Church the gigantic task of Christianising the nations; and consequently the progress of the work must greatly depend on the tone and temper of the Churches in regard to it. It has been well said that a truly Missionary pastor will make a Missionary people; but it is equally certain that a truly Missionary people will produce able and true-hearted Missionaries. Your Missionaries will be just like yourselves. If they are not up to the mark, it is your fault as well as their own. You live on a high level of consecration to Christ in this matter, and your Missionaries will tower above it, and by their devotion and ardour will kindle within your breasts aspirations still higher and nobler. But be you cold and dead, and they will be chilled down to your own coldness and stiffened to your own deadness. It is absurd to expect to see the Missionaries flame and coruscate with Missionary enthusiasm, whilst the Churches are sitting among the snows, frost-bitten, shivering, and almost lifeless with

cold. The work of converting the heathen world is as hard as it is glorious. Before it is accomplished God's people generally must take a much deeper personal interest in it. The Churches must give more freely and generously of their gold and silver; men of ability and personal influence must go forth in much greater numbers than they do at present; and our prayers must become more earnest and heartfelt for the dark places of the earth. Don't suppose that any sort of praying for the heathen will do—we must all wrestle with God. Don't suppose that any sort of man will do for a Missionary, and deem it a pity and a misfortune when a man of real worth devotes himself to the work. There is not a Missionary on the field, however gifted and accomplished, who does not feel that he would be much more efficient as a Missionary if he were more highly endowed as a man and a Christian.

It is not my habit to say anything to induce young men to devote themselves to this work, for I have a wholesome dread of man-inspired Missionaries. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without telling you, young men who are preparing for the ministry, that I thank God most sincerely and devoutly that I am a Missionary. I have never regretted the step I took many years ago in opposition to the strongly-expressed wishes of my best friends; and if there is a sincere desire burning within my breast, it is that I may live and die in labouring and suffering for Christ among the heathen. Oh! it is a glorious work. I know no work like it—so real, so unselfish, so apostolic, so Christ-like. I know no work that brings Christ so near to the soul, that throws a man back so completely upon God, and that makes the grand old Gospel appear so real, so precious, so divine. And then think of the grandeur of our aim! Our cry is, "China for Christ!" "India for Christ!" "The world for Christ!" Think of China and her hundreds of millions becoming our Lord's and his Christ's! Is there nothing grand in that idea? Is there nothing soul-stirring in the prospect? Is that not an achievement worthy of the best efforts of the Church, and of the noblest powers of the most richly endowed among you? And then think of the unspeakable privilege and honour of having a share in a work which is destined to have such a glorious issue. Oh! young men, think of it; dwell upon it; and if you hear the voice of God bid you go, manfully take up your cross and go, and you will never cease to "thank Christ Jesus our Lord" for counting you worthy to be Missionaries.

And oh, brethren, we, the Missionaries, must have your prayers, and the prayers of all the Churches. Without you we are weak; but sustained by your prayers we are strong, we can brave all things, dare all things, and endure all things. You carry the Missionaries to heaven in your prayers, and they will descend upon the heathen "like rain upon the mown grass, as showers

that water the earth!" May God baptise us all afresh with the Missionary spirit. May He continue to smile upon this great Society, and all the other Societies. May He cause the present coldness, indifference, and scepticism in regard to Missions, speedily to pass away. May He bring all His people to see and feel the responsibility which devolves upon them individually in respect to the extension of the kingdom of His Son and the salvation of the heathen. And may He so inspire us all with love for souls and compassion for perishing men, that we shall feel it to be not only a solemn duty, but also a great privilege to contribute towards the Missionary cause according to our means, and labour in its behalf according to our ability. Amen.

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## APPENDIX.

The following despatch was addressed to Sir R. Alcock, by the Chinese Foreign-Office, and was read by him in the course of his late examination before the Parliamentary Committee on Indian Finance :—

### “THE TSUNG-LI YAMEN TO SIR R. ALCOCK.

“The writers have on several occasions, when conversing with his Excellency the British Minister, referred to the opium trade as being prejudicial to the general interests of commerce. The object of the treaties between our respective countries was to secure perpetual peace, but, if effective steps cannot be taken to remove an accumulating sense of injury from the minds of men, it is to be feared that no policy can obviate sources of future trouble. Day and night the writers are considering the question, with a view to its solution, and the more they reflect upon it the greater does their anxiety become, and hereon they cannot avoid addressing his Excellency very earnestly on the subject. That opium is like a deadly poison, that it is most injurious to mankind, and a most serious provocative of ill-feeling is, the writers think, perfectly well known to his Excellency, and it is therefore needless for them to enlarge further on those points. The Prince (the Prince of Kung is the President of the Board) and his colleagues are quite aware that the opium trade has long been condemned by England as a nation, and that the right-minded merchant scorns to have to do with it. But the officials and people of this empire who cannot be so completely informed on the subject, all say that England trades in opium because she desires to work China's ruin, for (say they) if the friendly feelings of England are genuine, since it is open to her to produce and trade in everything else, would she still insist on spreading the poison of this hurtful thing through the empire? There are those who say, Stop the trade by enforcing a rigorous prohibition against the use of the drug. China has the right to do so doubtless, and might be able to effect it; but a strict enforcement of the prohibition would necessitate the taking of many lives. Now, although the criminals' punishment would be of their own seeking, bystanders would not fail to say that it was the foreign merchant seduced them to their ruin by bringing the drug, and it would be hard to prevent general and deep-seated indignation; such a course, indeed would tend to arouse popular anger against the foreigner. There are others again who suggest the removal of the prohibitions against the growth of the poppy. They argue that as there is no means of stopping the foreign (opium) trade, there can be

no harm, as a temporary measure, in withdrawing the prohibition on its growth. We should thus not only deprive the foreign merchant of a main source of his profits, but should increase our revenue to boot. The sovereign rights of China are indeed competent to this; such a course would be practicable, and indeed the writers cannot say that, as a last resource, it will not come to this; but they are most unwilling that such prohibition should be removed, holding, as they do, that a right system of government should appreciate the beneficence of Heaven and (seek to) remove any grievance which afflicts its people, while to allow them to go on to destruction, although an increase of revenue may result, will provoke the judgment of Heaven and the condemnation of men. Neither of the above plans indeed are satisfactory. If it be desired to remove the very root and to stop the evil at its source, nothing will be effective but a prohibition to be enforced alike by both parties. Again, the Chinese merchant supplies your country with his goodly tea and silk, conferring thereby a benefit upon her; but the English merchant empoisons China with pestilent opium. Such conduct is unrighteous. Who can justify it? What wonder if officials and people say that England is wilfully working out China's ruin, and has no real friendly feeling for her. The wealth and generosity of England are spoken of by all; she is anxious to prevent and anticipate all injury to her commercial interest; how is it, then, she can hesitate to remove an acknowledged evil? Indeed it cannot be that England still holds to this evil business, earning the hatred of the officials and people of China, and making herself a reproach among the nations, because she would lose a little revenue were she to forfeit the cultivation of the poppy! The writers hope that his Excellency will memorialise his Government to give orders in India and elsewhere to substitute the cultivation of cereals or cotton. Were both nations to rigorously prohibit the growth of the poppy, both the traffic in and the consumption of opium might alike be put an end to. To do away with so great an evil would be a great virtue on England's part; she would strengthen friendly relations and make herself illustrious. How delightful to have so great an act transmitted to after ages! This matter is injurious to commercial interests in no ordinary degree. If his Excellency the British Minister, cannot, before it is too late, arrange a plan for a joint prohibition (of the traffic), then, no matter with what devotedness the writers may plead, they may be unable to cause the people to put aside ill-feeling, and so strengthen friendly relations as to place them for ever beyond fear of disturbance. Day and night, therefore, the writers give to this matter most earnest thought, and overpowering is the distress and anxiety it occasions them. Having thus presumed to unbosom themselves, they would be honoured by his Excellency's reply.

*"Peking, July, 1869.*



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